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RECH 509 ENER 502 FISC 214 JAI 1039 - COM(2013) 800 final + COR 1

Subject: Greening the European Semester
- Exchange of views
= Contributions from delegations

Delegations will find in the Annex, for their information, contributions from SI and SE to the exchange of views on Greening the European Semester at the Environment Council on 3 March 2014.

SLOVENIA

1. *In light of the Annual Growth Survey 2014, what do you see as the main bottlenecks in achieving the Europe 2020 resource efficiency and low-carbon objectives?*
2. *In your opinion, which measures at a national level in the field of resource efficiency and climate action have the biggest potential to contribute to sustainable growth and job creation while addressing the existing environmental challenges and could be integrated, as relevant, in the 2014 National Reform Programmes?*
3. *How could the role/involvement of Environment Ministers be strengthened in the various phases of the European semester cycle?*

Instead of focusing on obstacles in achieving environmental objectives, we would rather address the opportunities for achieving them within the 2020 EU Strategy.

In our opinion the biggest opportunity in achieving the 2020 EU Strategy objectives is the integration of the environment into mainstream policies. This way the environmental and climate efforts could strengthen themselves as horizontal subject matters in terms of standards and do not remain marginal topics that burden other sectors. Environmental obstacles need to be seen as opportunities while resource efficiency has to be viewed as a potential comparative advantage of the EU and as a contribution to the competitiveness of the economy. Moreover, green tax reform and transfer of taxes away from labour on to tax bases linked to pollution and the source of environmental damage, together with removal of environment-harming subsidies; need to be viewed as an issue of efficient use of public resources.

This year's Annual Growth Survey indicates elements which strengthen such orientation, yet we fear that they are more noticeable to us who are present here today than to those who will prescribe and evaluate the implementation of individual recommendations (CSR).

As regards the last question we believe that the most important issue is not strengthening the role and participation of environmental ministers in the European Semester, but strengthening the role and participation of finance ministers and Prime Ministers in the greening of the Semester. Environmental Council should intensively take part in the greening, yet cannot be satisfied with just having a parallel debate with those who actually implement the strategy. Based on today's debate we could expect that also other working bodies, who can of course expect assistance from the Environmental Council, will discuss the greening of the European Semester.

As one of the most important fields which need to be strengthened (besides the green tax reform and speedy implementation of energy efficiency measures) and have the most potential for generating new workplaces, is the efficient use of resources and development of adequate indicators for measuring the consumption of resources. Since it is important to measure what we want to manage, it is essential to integrate relevant indicators into the Annual growth survey. At the moment resource productivity indicator is vital, hence we propose this one.

In the end we wish to welcome the initiative of the European Commission in its efforts for greening the European Semester and also the incoming Italian Presidency which will put the greening of the European Semester high on its Presidency Agenda. To conclude, we propose that also financial experts and representatives of financial ministries are made part of the Commission's greening expert group.

SWEDEN

The Swedish government considers it important to further develop market based instruments and we would therefore like to highlight the Council Conclusions from October 2009.

In the Council Conclusions, the Commission was encouraged to set up a Forum on Market-based Instruments. This Forum has only met twice. We find this Forum to be a valuable tool to facilitate for experts from the areas of environment and finance to reach a common understanding on issues.

We also think it is important to follow up on the phasing out of environmentally harmful subsidies which was highlighted in the Council Conclusions.

Finally, we would like to underline the importance of following up progress towards the goal to use 20 % of the EU budget for climate action. In this context, Sweden would thus like to suggest that the Commission should report to the Council on this progress, as this is valuable information both to the Environment Council as well as the European Council.
